

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 IO-04 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 051

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, VS

SUBJECT: TRAN QUOC BUU PROPOSES AVENUE TO PEACE IN VIET-NAM

1. THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION OF THE CVT, WHICH RAN FROM OCTOBER 29 THROUGH OCTOBER 31 CREATED A BIT OF A STIR IN THE

POLITICAL CLIMATE THAT CURRENTLY ENVELOPES SOUTH VIET-NAM. PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU OPENED THIS SPECIAL CONVENTION WITH WHAT

IS CONSIDERED TO BE A STRONG SPEECH THAT APPEALED TO NORTH VIET-NAM AND SOUTH VIET-NAM TO ADHERE TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND BRING PEACE TO THE MASSES. PEACE, HE SAID, WAS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER

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TO REVIVE THE NATIONAL SPIRIT, BRING ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION AND

DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ERADICATE CORRUPTION. "WITHOUT PEACE, IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRACY IS DELAYED OR LIMITED UNDER THE PRETEXT OF 'MEASURES TAKEN FOR NATIONAL SECURITY'. THE STARTING POINT FOR A PERMANENT POLITICAL SOLUTION AND PEACE IN VIET-NAM IS THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND ITS REQUIREMENT FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD." HE SAID THAT HO CHI MINH TRAIL WAS STILL BEING USED AS A STRATEGIC HIGHWAY WHEREBY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISTS STILL ASSIST THE COMMUNISTS IN INDOCHINA. BUU CALLED UPON THE COMMUNISTS TO ABANDON THEIR "FOOLISH INVASION DREAM" (PUT DOWN THEIR ARMS) AND COME OUT IN THE OPEN AND WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR THE COMMON PROSPERITY OF THE NATION. BUU CALLED UPON THE GVN TO ALLOW THE "OTHER SIDE TO CONDUCT ITS ACTIVITIES OPENLY AND TO COMPLY WITH THE PARIS AGREEMENT." HE REMINDED THE DELEGATES THAT A YEAR AGO AT THE 1973 CONVENTION HE CALLED FOR THE SAME THINGS, AND SINCE THEN AT MEETINGS OF THE CVT COUNCIL, THE ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR DAY (MAY DAY) AND AT CONFERENCES HELD INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY "WE HAVE ALWAYS WARNED AGAINST THE DARK ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES WHICH ARE SPREADING MORE AND MORE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN MACHINERIES FROM THE CENTRAL TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

2. (COMMENT: WHILE NOT REPEAT NOT MENTIONING PRESIDENT THIEU BY NAME ANYWHERE IN HIS SPEECH, BUU CONSIDERS THAT HE MADE CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHAT GOVERNMENT OR THE LEADERSHIP SHOULD DO.) BUU FURTHER TOLD THE DELEGATES THAT IT HAD BEEN A MISTAKE FOR THE GVN TO PUT THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES OUT OF BUSINESS (DECREE LAW 060) BECAUSE THEY "HAVE SOME INFLUENCE AMONG THE PEOPLE."

3. THERE IS A GREAT NEED TO HAVE AN ERA OF RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD WHICH CAN ONLY COME INTO BEING WHEN WE "GRADUALLY ABOLISH THE BOUNDARIES OF DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIC CONCEPTS. EUROPEAN UNIONS", HE SAID, "HAVE ABOLISHED ALL THEIR DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES AND IN MAY OF THIS YEAR ESTABLISHED A EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS TO BECOME STRONGER IN THE SERVICE OF THE WORKERS. WE IN VIET-NAM MUST SET ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES AND JOIN TOGETHER. I AM THEREFORE INVITING ALL SOUTH VIETNAMESE UNIONS TO COME TOGETHER IN THE CVT." HE WELCOMED THE RETURN OF THE RAILROAD WORKERS FEDERATION AS THE FIRST STEP IN THAT DIRECTION.

4. (COMMENT: BUU TOLD LABATT THAT THE BANK WORKERS UNION WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOON AFFILIATE WITH CVT AND AS SOON AS THE CVT FERTILIZER LOAN IS APPROVED AND HE STARTS EARNING MONEY FROM THE SALE OF THE FERTILIZER HE WILL HAVE CVT CADRE ASSIGNED TO PERSUADING ALL UNIONS TO AFFILIATE WITH CVT.)

5. BUU SAID LABOR MUST GET ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER BEFORE IT CAN EXPECT TO PERSUADE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MERGE FOR THE COMMON GOOD. "WHEN WE UNIFY THE LABOR MOVEMENT WE WILL BRING THE

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE RELIGIOUS GROUPS TOGETHER INTO ONE BIG NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION THAT WILL GIVE THE GVN THE STRENGTH IT NEEDS TO DEAL WITH THE COMMUNISTS."

6. (COMMENT: BUU TOLD LABATT THAT NEXT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, THE NEWLY ELECTED CVT COUNCIL WILL MEET TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD REBUILDING THE NATIONALISTS SO THAT THE GVN WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO IMPLEMENT THE RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD PRESCRIBED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT. STRENGTHENING THE NATIONALISTS IS NOT INTENDED TO OVERTHROW THIEU. THIEU AS A PERSONALITY MEANS NOTHING, "BUT HE IS THE IMAGE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM AND IF HE FALLS, WE ALL FALL.")

7. BUU ALSO TOLD THE DELEGATES THAT THE CVT CONDEMNS CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM AND WOULD FOCUS CVT MEMBERS' ATTENTION ON THE COMMUNITY WITH A NEW "COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY SYSTEM" THAT WOULD CEASE TO MEASURE DEVELOPMENT BY GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT "AND SWITCH TO MEASURING DEVELOPMENT BY 'GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS' (WHAT SHARE OF DEVELOPMENT DO THE MASSES GET)."

8. "THE AUTHORITIES ARE NOT ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR SITUATION," HE SAID, "BUT ALL THE PARTIES, THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THE POLITICA

LEADERS ARE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE. THEY ARE REQUESTED TO FORGET THEIR DIFFERENCES, THEIR COLORS OR POLITICAL TENDENCIES AND GET TOGETHER AS ONE FOR NEGOTIATION WITH THE OTHER SIDE." HE SAID "THE CVT WOULD SHAKE HANDS WITH THE LANDLESS ONES (PROLETARIAT) IN THE NORTH AND FORGET RANCOR AND HATRED, HEAL THE SPLIT AND FILL UP THE SORROWFUL AND SHAMEFUL RIVER THAT HAS DIVIDED OUR COUNTRY."

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9. REACTIONS TO BUU'S SPEECH: WE THINK IT SIGNIFICANT THAT
THE RESPECTED
INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER CHINH LUAN, IN A LENGTHY
AND FACTUAL REPORT, DID NOT INTERPRET BUU'S SPEECH IN ANY WAY AS
AN ATTACK ON PRESIDENT THIEU.

10. THE OPPOSITION PAPER DIEN TIN COMMENTED, "MANY PROGRESSIVE
UNION LEADERS ARE STILL AFRAID THAT THE GROUP OF TRAN QUOC BUU
WILL LEAD THE CONVENTION TO A NEW TREND. WE BELIEVE THAT THAT WILL
HAPPEN BECAUSE RECENTLY CVT ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE REQUESTING THE
WORKERS TO BE QUIET, WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE
FOR THE RIGHT TO LIVE."

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11. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE NEWSPAPER NHAN DAN ATTACKS BUU
AS AN INSINCERE CRITIC OF THIEU, CALLING BUU A "WHORE". IT WENT ON
TO SAY THE BUU WAS AN AMERICAN SPOKESMAN CARRYING OUT THE ORDERS
OF GEORGE MEANY, PRESIDENT OF THE AFL-CIO. BUU, IT SAID, AIDED
THE JAPANESE AND TOOK ORDERS FROM THE FRENCH AND THEN AMERICAN
IMPERIALISTS.

12. THE CLANDESTINE LIBERATION RADIO SAID IN A LENGTHY REPORT THAT
"LABOR KING TRAN QUOC BUU" WAS INSINCERE AND PRETENDED TO
CRITIZE THIEU BY UTTERING DECEITFUL BOASTS. WORKERS AND COM-
PATRIOTS OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE IN THE SOUTHERN CITIES KNOW THAT BUU
IS THE LACKEY OF THE U.S.-THIEU CLIQUE WHICH HAS DIVIDED THE TRADE
UNIONS AND SABOTAGED THE LEGITIMATE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT OF THE
WORKERS.

13. THE CVT DELEGATES UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A "PEACE AND
POLITICAL SOLUTION IN VIET-NAM" RESOLUTION THAT CALLS ON THE
COMMUNISTS TO "LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS AND COMPETE WITH US IN
BUILDING UP FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY IN ALL OF
VIET-NAM, NOT JUST IN SOUTH VIET-NAM."

14. COMMENT: THE CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS THAT BUU MADE IN HIS SPEECH WERE MADE WITH PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES THAT THIEU WAS PREPARED TO SUBMIT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING LAWS 007/72 AND 019/69 (PRESS CENSORSHIP), LAW 060/72 (POLITICAL PARTIES), AND LAW 004/72 (RIGHT TO STRIKE.) BUU SPENT MANY HOURS WITH PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND PRESIDENT THIEU PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION DISCUSSING CABINET CHANGES AND NEW POLICIES. SO, IN EFFECT, WHAT BUU HAS DONE IS TO GIVE THE ADMINISTRATION A MORE REPRESENTATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION BODY TO WHICH IT CAN YIELD AND NOT APPEAR TO BE GIVING IN TO THE RELATIVELY SMALL, VIOLENT AND DIVIDED ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT. THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE BEING DEBATED POSE THE DANGER OF FURTHER DIVIDING THE ALREADY DIVIDED COUNTRY. BUU'S CENTRAL POINT WAS "LET US NATIONALISTS PUT OUR HOUSE IN ORDER SO WE CAN ACT AS ONE." THIEU WOULD HAVE TO LISTEN TO UNITED NATIONALISTS. WITHOUT UNITY, BUU SAYS, THIEU TOO OFTEN LISTENS TO WHOM HE PLEASES, AND THESE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT ARE LIMITED TO THE PALACE GUARD.

15. CRITICS OF BUU'S SPEECH MENTION ONLY THOSE PARTS THAT DEAL WITH CORRUPTION AND FREEDOMS; THEY COMPLETELY OMIT ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENTION OF THE FACT BUU SEVERLY CRITICIZED THE COMMUNISTS FOR NOT ADHERING TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT. HE ALSO CRITICIZED THE CATHOLICS AND BUDDHISTS FOR THEIR FAILURE TO JOIN TOGETHER AS NATIONALISTS AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS. BUU BELIEVES THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT WEAKENS ITSELF BY ITS FAILURE TO CRITICIZE THE COMMUNISTS-- THEY PROJECT ONLY AN ANTI-THIEU POSTURE, NOT ANTI-COMMUNIST AS WELL.

16. ERRONEOUS REPORT IN NEW YORK TIMES. IT IS APPARENT TO US THAT BUU'S SPEECH IN NO WAY MARKS A SHIFT IN BUU'S POSITION IN THE DIRECTION OF THE RADICAL OPPOSITION. IN FACT HIS POSITION IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS EXPRESSED AT THE 1973 CONVENTION. NEW YORK TIMES' MARKHAM WAS COMPLETELY WRONG IN HIS ANALYSIS (NYT OCTOBER 30) IN SAYING THAT THE SPEECH INDICATED BUU'S "NEAR DEFECTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT CAMP" AND A "FURTHER EROSION OF MR. THIEU'S POPULAR SUPPORT." HE WAS DOUBLY WRONG IN THIS STATEMENT INASMUCH AS BUU HAS NEVER BEEN IN THE "GOVERNMENT CAMP" AND HAS ALWAYS TAKEN GREAT CARE TO ASSUME AN INDEPENDENT STANCE, AS ANY MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT OR THE CVT COULD HAVE INFORMED HIM. MARKHAM APPARENTLY OVERLOOKED THE PASSAGE IN THE SPEECH (PARA 1 ABOVE) IN WHICH BUU REMINDED HIS HEARERS THAT HE HAD CALLED FOR THE SAME THINGS AT THE 1973 CONVENTION. MARKHAM MIGHT HAVE AVOIDED THIS ERROR IF, LIKE SOME OTHER AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS HERE, HE HAD TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO INTERVIEW BUU DURING THE CONVENTION.

MARTIN

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